

AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL CONCERNING
ARIZONA ELEGANS KENNICOTT. Z.N.(S.) 1454

By L. B. Holthuis (*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, The Netherlands*)

The conclusions reached by Drs. Williams and Smith (1962, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 19(5) : 298-300) in the present very complicated case are not fully shared by me. My reasons are the following : As Boulenger (1894, *Cat. Snakes Brit. Mus.* 2 : 66) in proposing his *Coluber arizonae* did not state it to be a replacement name it cannot, on technical grounds, be considered as such ; while Boulenger furthermore did not indicate a holotype for his new species all the specimens referred to by him are syntypes. Judging by the account given by Drs. Williams and Smith the first author to select a lectotype from among these syntypes was Klauber (1946, *Trans. San Diego Soc. nat. Hist.* 10(17) : 321-322), who so selected the specimen from Duval County in the British Museum. This action definitely settles the identity of *Coluber arizonae* Boulenger. Boulenger's (1895, *Zool. Rec.* 1894(4) : 28) later citation of "*Coluber arizonae* n.n. for *Arizona elegans*" has no influence on the status of the name *arizonae*, as technically Boulenger does not propose a new name here but only used an already published name as a replacement name for *Arizona elegans* Kennicott ; under the Code this action even is not a legal restriction of the type-specimen.

(2) Though Boulenger's (1895) action does not influence the status of the name *arizonae*, it is of decisive importance for that of the name *elegans* Kennicott, which is clearly rejected here as a homonym by Boulenger and thus under the Rules cannot be used again. In order to save Kennicott's name the plenary powers have to be used.

In para. 14(a) of their application Drs. Williams and Smith ask for the "use of the plenary powers to validate the specific name *elegans*", without indicating how this should be done. I do not think that the Commission can possibly comply with the request as it stands. It, namely, cannot just declare a name valid. The validity of a name, namely, depends not only on nomenclatural, but also on taxonomic grounds. Zoologists with different taxonomic viewpoints may have different opinions about whether a name is or is not valid. A decision of the Commission validating a name would be declaring a name to have priority over any name with which it ever might be synonymized or homonymized, an action, so far as I know, never undertaken by the Commission ; this action could only be taken once by the Commission without transgressing on the field of taxonomy, because in declaring a second name to be "valid" the Commission would make it impossible for taxonomists to synonymize the two species to which these names are given.

What Drs. Williams and Smith should have done is to ask the Commission to take under its plenary powers the necessary steps to remove the obstacles which in their opinion make the name *elegans* Kennicott invalid and to specify each of these steps individually. Such a step could be a declaration by the Commission that the name *elegans* Kennicott is not to be considered a rejected homonym on account of Boulenger's (1896) action.

(3) If the above request is granted by the Commission and so the name *elegans* Kennicott is made the valid name for the species for which it was proposed, the names *arizonae* and *elegans* become available for the two subspecies of *Arizona elegans* mentioned by Drs. Williams and Smith. The name *arenicola* Dixon, 1960, falls as an objective synonym of *arizonae* and should be put on the Official Index.

(4) To obtain the end sought by Drs. Williams and Smith the Commission should be requested to take the following actions :

- (a) to use its plenary powers and declare that the name *elegans* Kennicott, 1859, as published in the binomen *Arizona elegans* and defined by the lectotype U.S. Nat. Mus. No. 1722, designated by Blanchard, 1924 (*Occ. Papers*

- Mus. Zool. Univ. Michigan* 150 : 4), is to be considered as not having been rejected as a secondary homonym in any paper published prior to the proposed ruling ;
- (b) to place the generic name *Arizona* Kennicott, 1859 (gender : feminine) type-species, by monotypy *Arizona elegans* Kennicott, 1859, on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology ;
 - (c) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names :
 - (i) *elegans* Shaw, 1802, as published in the combination *Coluber elegans*, as defined by its lectotype (Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.) No. 1946. 1.8.8), selected by Williams and Smith, 1962 (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 19 : 300) ;
 - (ii) *elegans* Kennicott, 1859, published in the combination *Arizona elegans* and validated under (4)(a) above ;
 - (iii) *arizonae* Boulenger, 1894, as published in the combination *Coluber arizonae*, and defined by its lectotype (Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.) No. 90.7.30.40) selected by Klauber, 1946 (*Trans. San Diego Soc. nat. Hist.* 10(17) : 322) ;
 - (d) place on the Official Index of Invalid and Rejected Specific Names in Zoology the name *arenicola* Dixon, 1960, as published in the combination *Arizona elegans arenicola* (an objective junior synonym of *arizonae* Boulenger, 1894, a name placed on the Official List in para. (c)(i) above).

It would be possible to save the name *arenicola* by suppressing the name *arizonae* under the plenary powers for the purposes of the Law of Priority, but not for those of Homonymy, in addition to the actions requested above under (a), (b), (c)(i)(ii), while then at the same time the name *arizonae* would have to be placed on the Official Index and *arenicola* on the Official List. It does not seem justified, however, to involve the plenary powers to this end.

REVISION OF THE PETITION FOR VALIDATION OF *ARIZONA ELEGANS* KENNICOTT Z.N.(S.) 1454

By Kenneth L. Williams and Hobart M. Smith (*Dept. Zoology, University of Illinois, Urbana*)

The alternative proposal submitted by Dr. Holthuis contains a number of points with which agreement is a matter of course. Certainly it must be agreed that "validity" is a property unique to but one name for any species, whereas "availability" is a property common to an unlimited number of names applicable to any one species. These are concepts made clear by the 1961 Code and certainly accepted by us as attested by several articles by one of us on precisely this point (*e.g.*, 1962, *Syst. Zool.* 11 : 139-142, fig. 1).

It was our understanding that placement of any name on the Official List *ipso facto* renders it "valid", in the sense agreed to above, because the first (1958) instalment of the Official List specifically states (p. xii) that "a specific name once stabilized in this way is to be used in preference to any other name for the species concerned and . . . is not to be replaced by any other [trivial] name, even if later it is found either (1) that the [trivial] name in question is not an available name, or (2) that it is not the oldest available [trivial] name for the species in question, unless and until . . . the Commission shall so direct". Surely, then, placement of the name *Arizona elegans* on the Official List would constitute "validation" of the name ; and such inclusion would require exercise of the plenary powers because, as all agree, that name would otherwise be regarded as unavailable through permanent suppression as a secondary homonym. However, if the point remains debateable we are quite willing to rephrase our request, paragraph 14a,